

# SOLVING AMERICA'S BIG BEAUTY PROBLEM



COURT HOUSE AND POST OFFICE, PARIS, TEXAS

A FAMOUS EXAMPLE OF INCONGRUOUS AND INEFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT ARCHITECTURE



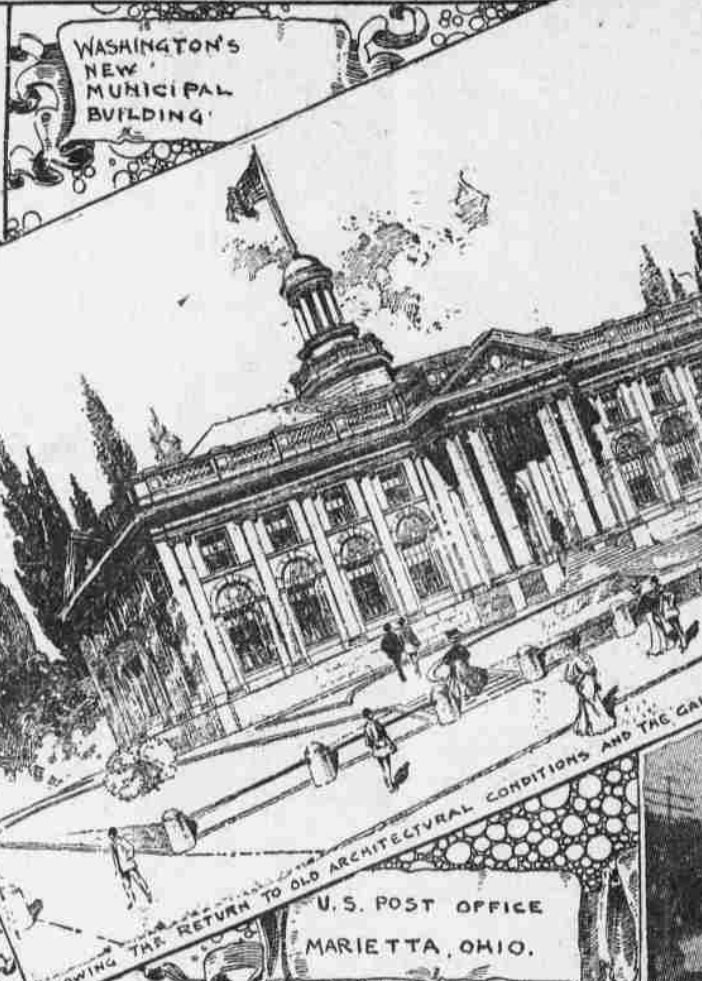
A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE CLASSIC STYLE NOW BEING USED LARGELY FOR PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN AMERICA. WASHINGTON, D.C.



AN IMPOSING BUT OTHERWISE INEFFECTIVE PILE OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD. WASHINGTON, D.C.

**N**OW that every enterprising American city and town and village has begun either to "spruce up" or to talk about doing it, having come of a sudden to the conclusion that perhaps after all it isn't exactly beautiful, the question has arisen: "What can we do about it?"

This question is coming into the offices of architects and officials of various sorts these days from all parts of the country. And something is being done about it, in fact, a very great deal indeed. Before we of the present generation are all comfortably in our graves we will see vast changes—just as astonishing changes as we have seen since we were children, and one of the most striking will be the great metamorphosis



WASHINGTON'S NEW MUNICIPAL BUILDING



AN EXAMPLE OF COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE SO TRUE TO THE STYLE OF SURROUNDING BUILDINGS, IT IS OFTEN MISTAKEN FOR VERY OLD BUILDING

from ugliness to practical, helpful beauty in our surroundings.

Our big cities, which have the hardest problems of unloveliness and inconvenience (which usually go hand in hand) are employing commissions of learned experts to tell them what they should and can do. The smaller cities are following suit with local art commissions and sometimes they send for an expert. The towns and villages have local improvement associations and art culture clubs and they are all working in the same direction.

"What's all this fuss about our town being not good enough?" asks the hard-headed business man, who prides himself on his scorn for all this art fol-de-rol. "It was good enough for my folks before me and it's good enough for me, I'm making money. Ain't we all pretty prosperous?"

"Yes, but," answers the culture club, "look at our rival down the line. It's got a new postoffice that's a beauty. It's on a square with trees around it and the new town hall opposite and a fine new hotel and there's new stores are coming in on the square. The farmers are saying that we haven't any attractions over here and they are going over there to do their buying."

"I wondered why that man Jenkins hadn't been in with an order for three weeks," growls the hard-headed business man, and scratches his head to aid in the perception of the new idea.

And so a new convert is made to the belief that good looks pay, whether it is the good looks of the stock or of the package and label or of the seller or the store, the building, the street or the town. A pleasant view gives pleasure just as surely as does a pleasant face, whether the view be of canned goods or dress goods or factories or mountains.

And the fact must be admitted that with the American people as a whole looks have been considered less in the past than almost anything else. So true is this that we even forgot what we did once know about beauty, about building farmhouses that were pleasant and attractive and public buildings that were dignified and really handsome. We may have thought we did but now we are being taught how little we really understood.

Our forefathers knew, though, and they set us an example, the excellence of which we are just beginning to appreciate.

The founders of the republic, the men of Washington's time, brought with them from the old world fine traditions of the beautiful and an inherited instinct for the value of simplicity. They built courthouses still standing in many little towns in the old south and of New England that later generations despoiled but which today have become the models for much of our best new architecture. These old courthouses, set in the midst of fine old trees, are genuinely beautiful, but it has taken us a hundred years to find it out and profit by it. Because we lost the traditions of the forefathers and didn't have time to go back to the old world for a new stock. So, we built queer, ungainly things that didn't fit and now we are finding out what is the matter with us that foreigners should laugh at our buildings and go home and call us barbarians.

The same is true of the homes. All through the south and New England the traveler finds charming old rest-

dences, built from 50 to 100 years ago. He says they are beautiful specimens of pure old Colonial architecture, the one style that is really American. He may agree that they are pleasing. We don't, perhaps, know why, but we think it is just because they are old. It has never occurred to us that they were not far inferior to our modern, turreted and otherwise highly embellished residences with the corners all sliced off and bay windows bulging from every vantage point. Perhaps we liked to look at the old house best as it shone white and stately through the trees, but we supposed it was just a little remnant of sentiment, and as such, of course, not to be encouraged.

But the fact remains that it has taken the American people nearly a hundred years to grow up to the point where they could intelligently appreciate the architectural worth of their own inheritance. The awakening is not yet complete, but we are learning very fast, indeed.

An interesting example of how we are returning to the standard our forefathers set and are doing what we can to preserve the fine traditions that were theirs is the Annapolis postoffice. Annapolis, where the United States naval academy is, is an old Colonial town. Almost every building is in that style. Two or three years ago congress made an appropriation for a new postoffice there. The matter was referred to the office of the supervising architect of the treasury, which designs and builds all Uncle Sam's mail depots.

Now the supervising architect, Mr. John Knox Taylor, happens to be a man of discernment, culture and good taste. He soon saw that the only kind of a postoffice that would be harmonious, pleasing and creditable among all those Colonial houses would be one of the Colonial style. At first Annapolis was inclined to be disappointed.

"We are tired of Colonial," they said. "Why can't you give us something up-to-date in Queen Anne?"

So Mr. Taylor explained and discussed and went on with his Colonial plans and built the charming post-office, a photograph of which is shown on this page. Quite recently a government official who was interested in the work of the supervising architect's office and heard that there was a new postoffice in Annapolis, returned to Washington from a visit there. He at once hunted up Mr. Taylor and in a grievous tone remarked:

"Say, Taylor, I thought you had just put up a new postoffice in Annapolis. I couldn't find it."

"We have," said Mr. Taylor, and it is — (naming the locality).

"Nonsense!" answered the official. "I searched that neighborhood thoroughly for one whole hour and I'll take my oath there is not a building in it less than 75 years old."

"Did you notice that?" said the architect, pointing to a photograph on the wall of his office.

"Certainly, that was one of them," was the answer. Mr. Taylor laughed.

"That is the highest compliment I have received in the ten years I have been in this office," he said.

And now Annapolis, which, by the way, has become more than reconciled to its Colonial postoffice since it has heard the enthusiastic comments of its many prom-

inent visitors, is to have an example of the other thing.

Recently congress appropriated \$14,000,000 for a new naval academy. With this, under the government's unsystematic and ridiculous way of looking after its building operations, the supervising architect had nothing to do. It was therefore perhaps natural that the winning designs, passed on by laymen evidently lacking in either discernment or taste, should be for buildings altogether un-American in style and entirely incongruous with either the purpose for which they are intended, the character of the town and location or the traditions of the country. The new naval academy is in the French style, very fine of its kind, and done by an architect of note (and French training), but it has the one fatal fault of being wholly unsuitable. And suitability is the first principle of good architecture just as it is the first principle of a successful career or almost anything else in life.

This case of the Annapolis naval academy is being much cited these days as a typical and flagrant example of what President Roosevelt sought to prevent when he appointed the much-discussed council of fine arts and gave it power over all executive building and park operations recently. He incurred the wrath of congress by doing it, for congress is as jealous as a spoiled child in the matter of its petty powers, but he also voiced the sentiment of a vast majority of the people. For it is very evident that there has been a great popular awakening to the value of the art side of life and to the pressing need for federal reform and the establishment of standards and methods that will help the individual communities to help themselves. So great, in fact, is the sentiment that both the house and senate are being forced to consider bills intended to do by law what the president did by executive order; turn the supervising architect's office of the treasury into a bureau of fine arts with supervision over the buildings and parks of all departments and add an advisory council composed of leading architects, painters and sculptors.

It is even possible that congress will be forced by the public demand to pass such a measure, though there is little doubt that they will avoid doing so if they can, at least until after President Roosevelt goes out of office, which means till the next session.

Instances of the need of such a bureau are especially numerous at the seat of the national government, in Washington, and here again the wisdom of our forefathers is apparent. Those buildings that were built in the early part of the last century are in the main dignified monuments to the sincerity, the intelligence and the good taste of that time. More than that, they were placed according to a definite and all embracing group plan, that of Maj. L'Enfant, which has not been improved upon to this day. In later years not only was this great and noble plan lost sight of entirely but such architectural and monumental monstrosities were produced for the uses of the government or the honor of national heroes as will be one of the great American jokes for generations to come.

There is reason to fear that the danger of further such blunders is not past, for congress is not inclined to be dictated to. It swallowed the "Burton Idea" measure making expert advice on contemplated rivers and harbor improvements compulsory, but it did so with a wry face.

However, the president's council of fine arts is an accomplished fact and for several years we have been getting beautiful postoffices at the rate of a hundred or more a year. The new department buildings are also so far ahead of what has gone before, and with all this growing sentiment and the widespread educational movement working towards more beautiful surroundings for the next generation hope begins that we will not only have beautiful architecture but architecture distinctly American.

In this regard a study of the new postoffices, the new department buildings at Washington and most of the best new monumental buildings in the larger cities, shows that architects have gone back for their models to the original source of the Colonial—to what is known as the classic style. In old Greece and Rome are found the simplest and most majestic monumental buildings ever erected. They are the purest source of architectural inspiration that man has. Their spirit, too, is in a large measure the spirit of our democracy—dignity and strength with simplicity—and it seems to have been some such idea as this that created the Colonial style.

Without forgetting the beauty and inspiration of our Colonial architecture, we have at last found time to go back to the old world to renew our nearly lost traditions. The result is a widespread revival of the classic style, modified to suit changed conditions and a new and distinct nationality, but so fundamentally true to the American spirit that we may feel at least that we are on the road to an expression of ourselves that will picture us truly to posterity.

## Sure Cure For Pirates

"A picture recently published in Munich shows that the peculiar vanity which manifests itself in a desire to be photographed often kills the sense of decency," says a writer in a Berlin paper. "The picture shows five uniformed men standing on the smoking ruins of a building. In front of them, propped up against the debris, are eight mutilated corpses. Under the picture is this legend: 'The Indian coast has been infested for hundreds of years by Malaga pirates. Recently a body of Europeans, conducted by natives, pursued and captured one of these robber bands, whom they bound and cast into a pagoda, which they then blew up with dynamite.' The men who posed for a picture, in which they seemed to gloat over the deed, the fruit of which forms the greivous foreground, were all Europeans."

## Tremendous Cost of Prairie Dogs

In the state of Texas alone, prairie dogs eat annually enough grass to support 1,562,500 cows. Utterly useless, the little animal is a pest so dreaded that the forestry service has undertaken his extermination. Poison is killing him, wherever he now flourishes, and another resource of the farmer is safeguarded.

Who would think that the prairie dog, the shy and amusing little rodent that we like to watch before the door

stock by the industrious burrowing of the "dogs."—From "To Exterminate the Prairie Dog," in Technical World Magazine.

### Value of Radium

The value of a speck of radium is incredibly great, and when the Hon. Sydney Holland, at Sir Frederick Treves' lecture at the London hospital recently, picked up the tube containing the famous surgeon's microscopic £800 worth of radium bromide Sir Frederick's concern for its safety

may not have been altogether assumed. While the late Prof. Curie was lecturing on the wonderful element one day in Paris he dropped the glass tube containing a few grains of radium with which he was demonstrating, and the glass breaking, the precious powder was scattered all over the floor. At once the room was cleared, every speck of dust collected with the greatest care, taken to the professor's laboratory, dissolved, re-crystallized and the radium extracted from the refuse again with the loss

of only an infinitesimal fraction. The cost of radium bromide is about £7 a milligramme, which would mean over £200,000 for an ounce avoirdupois.

### Longest Word in English Language

What is the longest word in the language? Says the London Chronicle: "The honors in English appear to rest between 'antidisestablishmentarianism' and 'honorificabilitudinitatibus,' the former word scoring 28 letters and ten syllables, as against 22 letters and 11

syllables in the latter. Two other words, 'disintellectualization' and 'in-circumscrip-tibleness,' may be commended to police inspectors in search of fresh tests of sobriety. These words are, of course, easily surpassed even in England by 'isometrimetronamido-benzophthylamides' and other gems of scientific phraseology; while if we cross the German ocean we find innumerable instances of 13-syllabled words, such as 'suepaardelooszonderapoorweggetroolyt,' the Dutch for 'motor car.'"

For Colds and Grip.

PE-RU-NA FOR CATARRH OF THE HEAD, THROAT, LUNGS, STOMACH, KIDNEYS, BLADDER AND FEMALE ORGANS.

FATHER HAD A GRIEVANCE. Some Excuse for His Violent Assault on Managing Editor.

Lina Cavalleri, the beautiful Roman prima donna, said recently of her "beauty parlor" in New York: "Beauty is woman's most important attribute. She who increases beauty is woman's greatest benefactor. Husbands, brothers, even fathers—in their inmost hearts beauty is the thing they desire most to see in their feminine relations."

She laughed. "Only the other day," she said, "a gray, fat old gentleman entered a newspaper office and said: 'Are you the managing editor?' 'Yes,' was the reply. 'I suppose that on you, then,' said the visitor, 'rests the responsibility for this morning's reference to my daughter Patty as Fatty. Take that!'"

### ATTENUATED.



He—See, Samantha, that shows how terribly thin some folks are.

### Wanted Longer Sermons.

It was a proud boast one clergyman made to two or three others who were having a quiet chat in his study the other night—namely, that he had actually on one occasion been asked to make his service, both prayers and sermon, a bit longer.

His brethren regarded him with superstitious awe, and one asked, feebly: "Where on earth was that?"

"Well, boys," was the frank confession, "it was with a goal where I acted as chaplain for a short time. The poor beggars dreaded to leave the church for their cells."

### A Tabled Fable.

A man once collided with an opportunity.

"Why don't you look where you are going?" growled the man.

"Don't you recognize me?" asked the opportunity, pleasantly.

"No, and I don't care to. You have trodden on my corns," replied the man as he limped away.

Moral: Don't believe the people who say they have never had a chance. —New York Times.

### Alas, How True!

"I often wonder," remarked Mr. Stubb, in solemn reflection, "if the last man on earth will have the last word."

"Of course he will, John," laughed Mrs. Stubb.

"But why are you so sure?"

"Because the last woman will give it to him."

### DIDN'T REALIZE

How Injurious Coffee Really Was.

Many persons go on drinking coffee year after year without realizing that it is the cause of many obscure but persistent ailments.

The drug—caffeine—in coffee and tea, is very like uric acid and is often the cause of rheumatic attacks which, when coffee is used habitually, become chronic.

A Washington lady said, recently: "I am sixty-five and have had a good deal of experience with coffee. I consider it very injurious and the cause of many diseases. I am sure it causes decay of teeth in children."

"When I drank coffee I had sick spells and still did not realize that coffee could be so harmful, till about a year ago I had rheumatism in my arms and fingers, got so nervous I could not sleep, and was all run down."

"At last, after finding that medicines did me no good, I decided to quit coffee entirely and try Postum. After using it six months I fully recovered my health beyond all expectations, can sleep sound and my rheumatism is all gone."

"There's a Reason."

Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read the famous little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pgs.

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true and full of human interest.